

Sealing of units continues

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, DEC. 19. Sealing of polluting industrial units in the non-conforming areas of the Capital gained momentum on Tuesday as enforcement teams continued with its operation for the second consecutive day.

By the end of the day they had visited as many as 689 units in the Keshavpuram and Rohini areas of North West Delhi, of which 276 were found to be polluting and sealed by the enforcement teams, headed by SDMs, according to an official release issued today.

Yesterday the enforcement teams had visited 761 units in Rohini and Keshavpuram of which only 145 were found polluting and sealed. "Today's sealing operation was much faster and smoother," said a senior Government official.

Though tension prevailed in the locality, particularly in the

Keshavpuram area, no untoward incident was reported by the police so far. As a preventive measure, a large contingent of police force was deployed including the Rapid Action Force.

Government officials monitoring the operations said that there was not much resistance from the public and owners of the industrial units.

"With such a large contingent of police force and the SDMs adamant to seal all the industrial units without listening to our valid argument, who would have dared to resist or oppose," said Mr. Ram Kishan Singhal, a BJP Councillor.

Both Mr. Singhal and the area Councillor, Mr. Atma Ram Gupta, alleged that today even the units in footwear manufacturing were sealed, which was spared by the SDMs on Monday.

Meanwhile, in view of the sealing operations and shifting of industrial units from the non-conforming areas to the National Capital Region, the Federation of Indian Export Organisation today demanded that the NCR be converted as a free trade zone.

"This will enable exporters to perform better in their respective areas and will facilitate the desire to move out expeditiously. This will also make the export goods a hassle free movement," said the FIEO president, Mr. Navratan Samdria, in a statement issued today.

According to him, due to these developments a large number of exporting units were greatly hit, including the ready-made garments, textile items, electronic goods, leather, chemicals, handicrafts and engineering products.

DPCC delegation urges L-G to stop harsh steps

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 19

CONCERNED OVER the manner in which the polluting industries are being sealed in the Capital, a delegation of senior Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee members met Lt Governor Vijai Kapoor today.

The delegation, led by DPCC chief Subhash Chopra, apprised the Lt Governor of the problems being faced by the factory owners because of the sealing. "It is at the behest of the Union Urban Development Minister, Mr Jagmohan, that the administrative staff has been sealing the units in a highly arbitrary manner. A curfew-like situation has developed in the Capital," said Mr Chopra.

The delegation included Mr Jag Pravesh Chandra, Mr Sajjan Kumar, Mr Jagdish Tytler, Mr J P Aggarwal, Mr Deep Chand, Mr Mukesh Sharma, and chairman of the Delhi Manufacturers' Association Ajit Chaudhary with the secretary Virmani. They urged Mr Kapoor to stop Mr Jagmohan's high-handed measures forthwith, warning that if appropriate steps are not taken immediately, the situation could turn explosive.

"When even the Prime Minister has been talking about first properly relocating the industrial units located and then closing them, what is the urgency for sealing all units immediately?" the delegation members asked Mr Kapoor. "The sealing of units without first providing alternate accommodation is inhuman and in violation of all democratic norms," they said.

Mr Mukesh Sharma said that at an emergency meeting held at the DPCC office it was decided that after eliciting the views of the representatives of the industry, the second phase of the Nyay Yudh would begin. Tomorrow, the DPCC will hold a dharna at Jantar Mantar demanding the resignation of Mr Jagmohan.

Delhi breathes, neighbours choke

KS Adhikari/Karuna M John

Sahibabad photo by

DELHI MAY breathe a little easier with the closure of polluting industries, but it may now be the turn of the neighbouring districts to gag on toxic fumes.

Across the border, on the National Highway, nearly 30 highly polluting industries have moved base in the past one month. The green Delhi that Union Urban Development Minister Jagmohan has envisioned, it appears, will still have a grey ring of pollution surrounding it.

Wary of the sealing whip cracked by the Supreme Court, a number of industry owners made good their escape before the squads started sniffing them out. Affordable land prices lured them across the Highway dividing National Capital Territory of Delhi from the Ghaziabad district. Technically these polluting industries were out of the Capital's non-conforming areas but nevertheless remained in close proximity to the buyer who had stayed behind.

A number of chemical manufacturing, plastic recycling, electroplating and dyeing units, all classified by the Union Urban Development Ministry, the nodal agency, as highly polluting 'F' category industries, have crossed the border to the welcoming arms of Uttar Pradesh.

On the flip side of the relocation coin are people living in numerous colonies on the outskirts of the Capital. Alarmed by the acidic blue liquid choking their drains, locals are looking for a new place to call home. The land prices may have shot up and many have made huge profits selling off plots to the newly shifting industries. Those who remain are left to deal with the rancid fumes.

According to residents, these areas on the Delhi-UP border were once considered free of pollution.



A chemical denim washing unit at Ghaziabad, the unit recently moved from Delhi

Rekha Srivastava

However, 150 polluting units from Delhi have already shifted there.

district and a number of villages in Maharaj Pur area.

Bidhuri decries CM on relocation

New Delhi

NATIONAL vice-president and spokesperson of Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on Tuesday held CM responsible for the chaotic conditions in wake of the SC order. "Had the CM acted seriously and timely, the present situation could have been warded off to a great extent," stated Mr Bidhuri. "Ms Dikshit alone is responsible for sounding the death knell for about 1.30 lakh small and medium industrial units owners and over 15 lakh industrial workers," he added.

Staff Reporter

The worst hit areas are Shaheed Nagar, Vikaram Garden, Vrindavan garden, Janak Puri, Rajeev Garden in Ghaziabad dis-

Khurana makes more noise

New Delhi

FORMER CHIEF Minister Madan Lal Khurana on Tuesday spit venom against Jagmohan at the parliamentary party meeting of the BJP. The Delhi leader, who has been opposing relocation of industries, is reported to have criticised the Union Government stand on the issue and Mr Jagmohan's refusal to make any amendments in the master plan. Mr Khurana alongwith the other BJP MPs have been threatening agitation the government if it failed to soften its stand.

Staff Reporter

"The air is rancid and the drains are choking," said Sunita Devi a resident of Janakpuri. Most residents are dependent on

ground water but soon after the industries came, the level has gone down to 35 to 40 feet. The newly shifted units bore their own tubewell and affect the domestic supply. According to sources, Ghaziabad administration has not even laid down the sewage system in Saheed Nagar and Janak Puri. The chemical waste of these polluting units flows in the open drains or seeps into the ground.

Residents also complain of high levels of noise pollutants, "the racket goes on till late evening, it is impossible to study," said Anil Kumar, whose house is nearly surrounded by denim dyeing units. The industrial units in are stressing an infrastructure meant or a sparse population. Electricity in a number of units is drawn on residential meters.

"This is the beginning and full extent of damage will be visible as more industries rush in," said Jamil Malik. Those who cannot move away, reconcile to the smell of acrid chemicals brought in by the evening breeze.

Day 2, 276 units sealed

Staff Reporter

New Delhi

ON THE second day of the first-phase of sealing of polluting industrial units at the Northwest district, 276 units were sealed on Tuesday.

According to a statement issued by the Delhi government reinforcement teams visited 689 units out of which 276 were sealed. The main focus of the review-cum-sealing drive was once again on the Keshavpuram area. The units faced little resistance and no untoward incidents were reported during the operation.

The statement added that a number of industrial units visited by the joint squads did not have any manufacturing activity. The owners had either left the premises, or had even changed the trade.

Though there was no resistance at the factories being sealed, the long-term agitation say industry owners will continue. "We will stage dharnas and court arrest in all districts," said Municipal Councillor Ajit Ghoshdury. The enforcement teams on Monday, in accordance with the Supreme Court directives, had sealed 145 factories in the Northwest district. The squads visited 761 industrial units in the Northwest district.

Union Urban Development Minister Jagmohan held a meeting of representatives from the National Capital Region states. Sheila Dikshit accompanied by Dr A K Walia also met Mr Jagmohan. According to Mr Jagmohan, Rajasthan had already received Rs 6 crore as advance payment for industrial plots. Industrial plots in Delhi will also be developed on a priority basis said Mr Jagmohan.

Factory owners hand over keys of locked premises

Special teams return with a vengeance

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 19. — Locking premises will not help keep at bay government teams deputed to close polluting units, as owners of many factories realised today.

Armed with hammers, the special teams in North-West Delhi returned to the units which were found locked yesterday. And it showed results.

Yesterday, the factory owners could not be traced, but today they suddenly materialised on hearing the hammers raining down on the locked doors.

In Rithala, a team searching for a listed unit, were stonewalled yesterday by the residents "who gave the wrong address and nature of business."

But today, after breaking the lock of the "right" unit, they "found that it was polluting and was into plastic granule manufacturing".

A similar scene was being enacted in Trinagar, where the teams discovered on breaking open the units left out that they "were in the shortlisted F

category." That was not all. "Some of the owners themselves handed over the keys to the locked premises," said a team member.

Earlier, there was an instruction that the vacated units should not be sealed. "But there was no clear instruction about what to do in case the unit had been locked," said another team member.

The teams had faced considerable hardship yesterday, with more than half of the polluting units escaping attention due to their locked doors. "There were about 20 units which were found locked when the team visited and could not be sealed yesterday," said a team member in Rithala.

After receiving feedback from the teams, it was decided at a meeting, last evening, of senior government officials that the units found locked should be forcibly opened to check their polluting status.

The results speak for themselves. Till afternoon, about 14 out of the 20 polluting units had been sealed by the Rithala team.

Similarly, a team in

Trinagar sealed 18 units till 3.00 p.m, compared to only 14 units yesterday.

This was still much lower than the rate at which industries were expected to be sealed.

"The target was pegged at 50 units today but breaking locks and then taking a decision about sealing takes lot of time," said a team member.

There was also, still much confusion in identifying the polluting units shortlisted under the F category. In some of the units visited, the teams could not find any clue to classify them under a particular category.

For instance, the team officials found it difficult to decide the status of glue manufacturing unit. It was finally sealed under the chemical factory category, as there were "no such glue making units in the shortlisted polluting units".

The owner of the factory, Mr Raman Gandhi, claimed that it was not a "water-polluting unit" — "We just boil water and starch, which forms glue after cooling down".

Congress to launch agitation 300 polluting units sealed

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 19. — The Delhi government's drive to close polluting industries gathered momentum on the second day, with its teams inspecting about 900 units and sealing over 300 units in North-West Delhi.

Though the drive went on peacefully for the second day, there were indications that things may not proceed as smoothly. The Delhi Congress, under pressure from party leaders, today decided to oppose the government's drive indirectly.

The Delhi Congress president, Mr Subhash Chopra, said the party had decided to launch the second phase of its campaign against the closure of industries, "Nyay Yudh" tomorrow. Mr Chopra, yesterday, announced that the campaign had been

"temporarily shelved".

Apparently fearing that this stand would antagonise the powerful lobby of factory owners, the decision was reversed at a meeting today.

Close to 500 units, which fall under the ambit of the 27 industries identified as "~~undisputedly polluting~~" have been closed in the last two days in Rohini and Keshavpuram in North-West Delhi.

There has, however, been a positive off-shoot of the drive. A Delhi government official said many residents of Delhi in certain areas had come forward to inform the government about the polluting units in their area.

"We received about 50 complaints, many of them in writing, from several parts of the Capital regarding polluting units operating in the residential areas.

Some ministers in the Delhi

government were approached by factory owners about the "confusion" over the closure of their industries. The latter, were, however, quick to claim that their units did not fall under the 27 industries targetted for closure.

A delegation of plastic footwear manufacturers approached a Delhi minister this morning.

"They told me that plastic footwear has been listed separately, also in the "F" category, and it is not in the list of the 27 industries identified for closure in the first leg. Yet their units were also sealed," said a minister.

Senior officials have been directed by the ministers, who were approached by the factory owners, to be "careful" about the identification of units. "There is confusion as it is not

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